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# Oglala Sioux Tribe

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Wiyaka Tokaheya Yuha Najin

Theresa B. Two Bulls  
President

April 27, 2009

Representative Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin  
331 Cannon  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT—BIA ROUTE 33 SECTION 10 THROUGH 30—19.4 MILES

### PRIORITY REQUEST NUMBER 2

Dear Representative Herseth-Sandlin:

Please accept this **LETTER OF SUPPORT** for the Oglala Sioux Tribe's **SECOND HIGHEST PRIORITY** for inclusion within the Reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. This project provides a necessary reconstruction of **BIA ROUTE 33** between Manderson (beginning at its junction with Route 28) to Rockyford (ending at its junction with BIA 27) for a distance of 19.4 miles. This road serves as an important transportation segment allowing access by Manderson and Wounded Knee residents to highways leading to Rapid City. The road is also an important component of plans to implement a Scenic By-Way on the Reservation. It is anticipated that many visitors to the South Unit of Badlands National Park will use BIA 33 to access the Wounded Knee gravesite to learn about that important event in tribal history. As President of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, I explicitly support the **BIA Route 33 Project** as the **second highest priority** project for inclusion within SAFETEA-LU.

BIA Route 33 is a relic of the old Bureau of Indian Affairs process of constructing roads that have an inadequate base, narrow lane widths, no shoulders, poor sight lines, and steep shoulder slopes. The present road surface has numerous areas of breakup due to the poor base. Sight lines are inadequate due to frequent dips that hide oncoming traffic from view. The OST Department of Transportation is presently working on two different areas that have had significant erosion that has undercut a part of the traffic lanes. The OSTDOT proposes to reconstruct the entire distance. The road base will be redesigned and built to support modern traffic standards. Cut and fill will remove many of the dips that cause collisions and lane widths will be increased to 12 feet for each travel lane. Shoulder slopes will be lessened to avoid needless roll-over accidents. Essentially, the reconstruction will bring the road up to modern standards so that it can meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of tourists and residents alike.

The OST Department of Transportation is requesting the **total cost** of the project at **\$29 million dollars**. The Tribe's annual funding under the Indian Reservation Roads Program is only about \$5 million dollars on average for the entire 3 million acre Reservation so the Tribe is unable to complete such major projects without significant federal financial support.

The public will have several opportunities to comment on the proposed project. The Tribe holds public hearings on major construction projects under provisions of 25 C.F.R. Part 170. The Tribe solicits comments in development of its Tribal Transportation Improvement Plan and the OSTDOT Road Commission considers those comments in its review of proposed construction projects. The Tribe's Economic and Business Development Committee then considers the matter further before action is requested by the Tribal Council or Executive Committee. The public can request their voice be heard at each hearing.

The proposed project is estimated to cost approximately **\$29 million dollars** and the Tribe requests that amount for **100% funding** under the reauthorized SAFETEA-LU (or successor) legislation.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe looks forward to reconstruction of BIA Route 33 and **I FULLY SUPPORT** the project. Please feel free to contact me if additional information is needed or you may contact the OST Transportation Director (Mr. Jeff Whalen) at 605-867-5376 (office), 605-441-0267 (cell), or [Ostroads@gwtc.net](mailto:Ostroads@gwtc.net) (email).

Sincerely,



Theresa Two Bulls  
President  
Oglala Sioux Tribe